SAMBHAJI

The entire Maratha kingdom was shocked when Sambhaji, the son of Shivaji, joined forces with the Mughal army, Shivaji's greatest foe.

Sambhaji had a tough childhood. His father was too busy to look after him and his mother died when he was only two. The young Sambhaji's main support came from his grandmother. When she died, he was bereft of love and care. To make matters worse, his step-mother was campaigning to make her own son the next ruler, trying to poison Shivaji's mind against Sambhaji.

This Amar Chitra Katha traces the events that led up to the coronation of this wise and just Maratha ruler.

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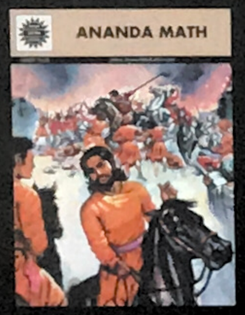

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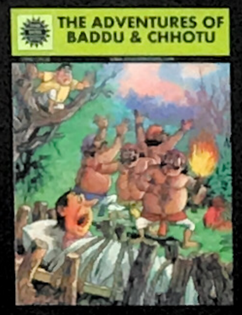

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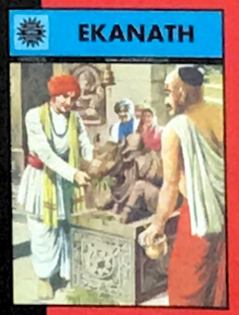

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SAMBHAJI

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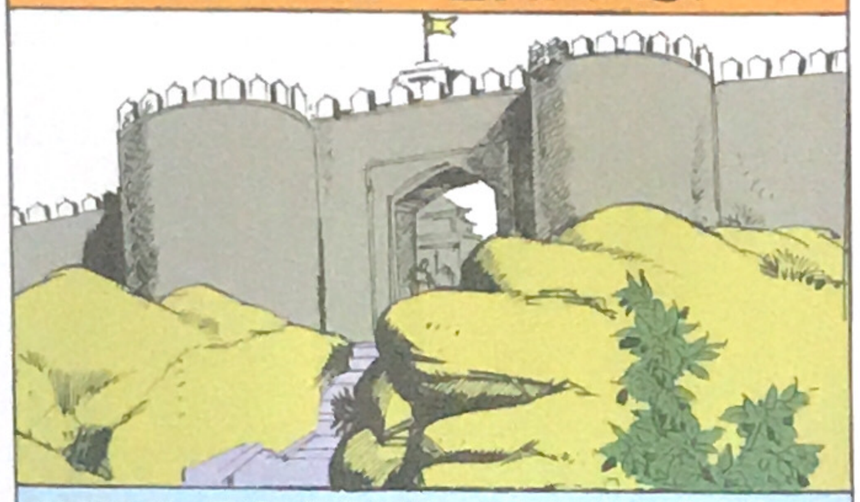
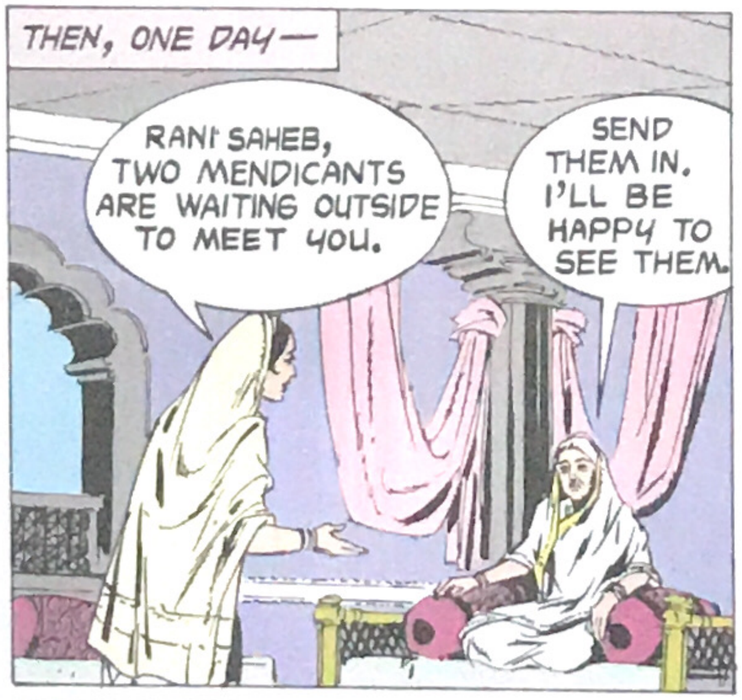
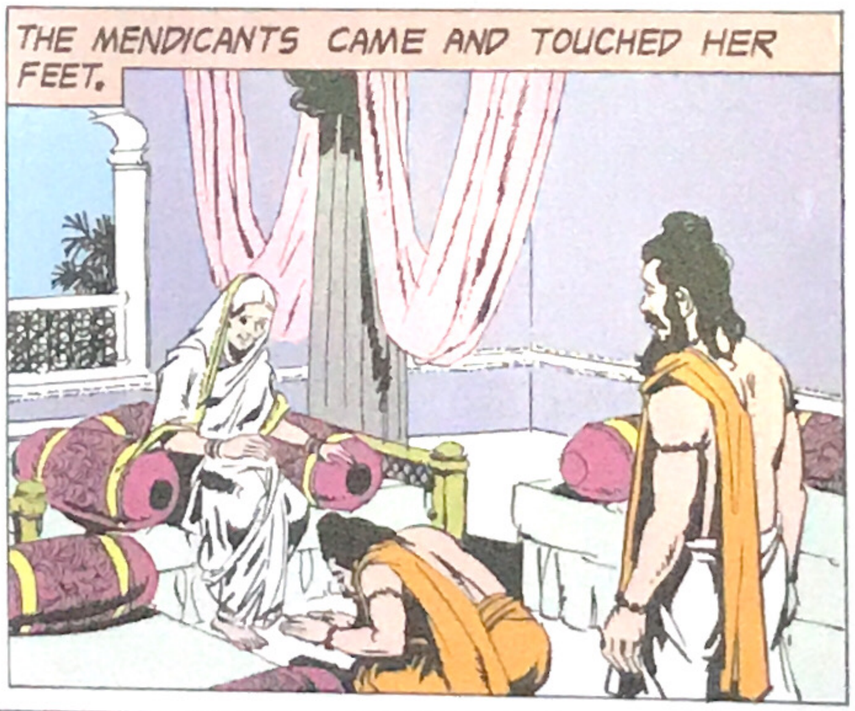
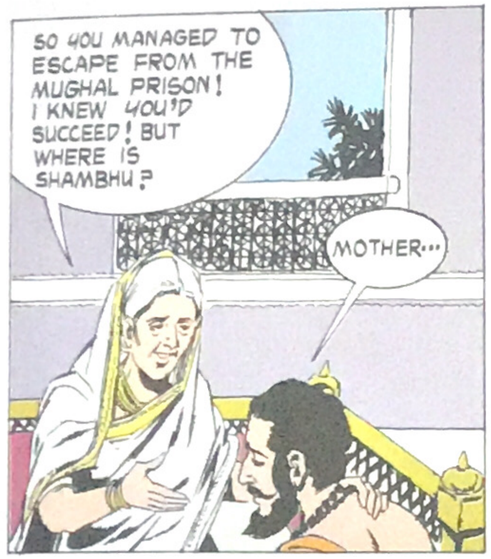
SAMBHAJI
SON OF SHIVAJI

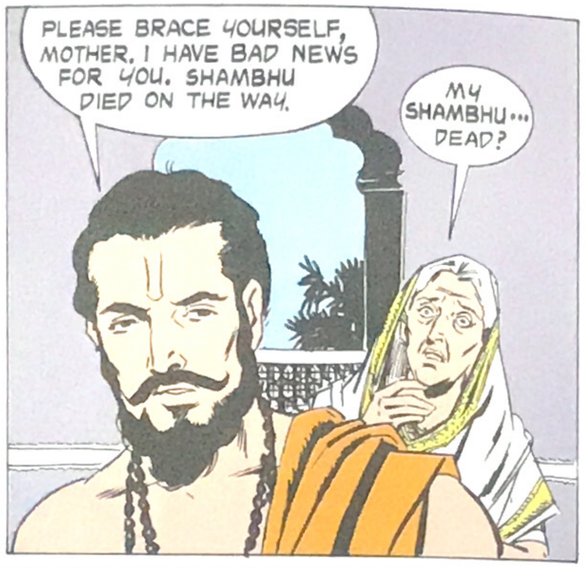


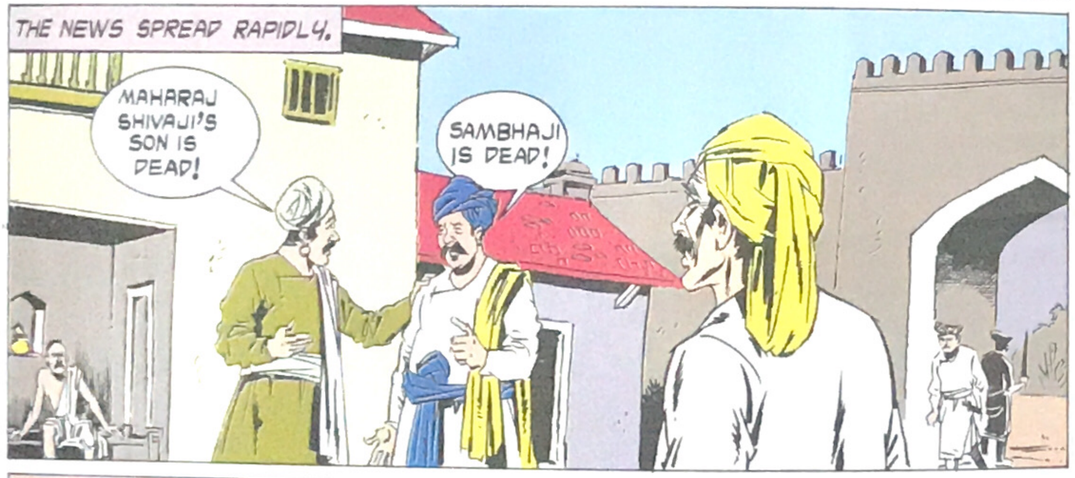
RAJGADH, THE MARATHA STRONGHOLD, WORE A DESOLATED LOOK. IT WAS THE YEAR 1666. SHIVAJI AND HIS LITTLE SON, SAMBHAJI, WERE STILL FAR AWAY IN AGRA, PRISONERS OF THE MUGHAL EMPEROR, AURANGZEB.

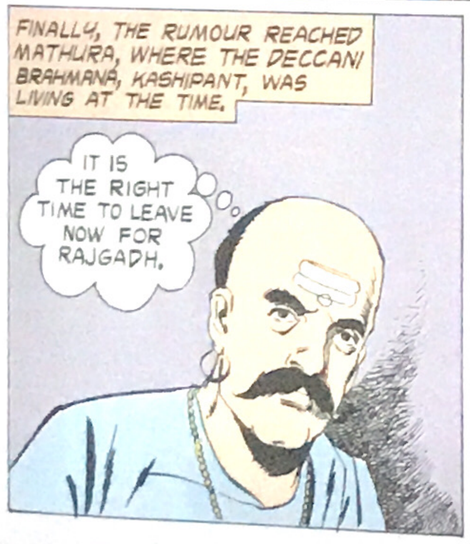




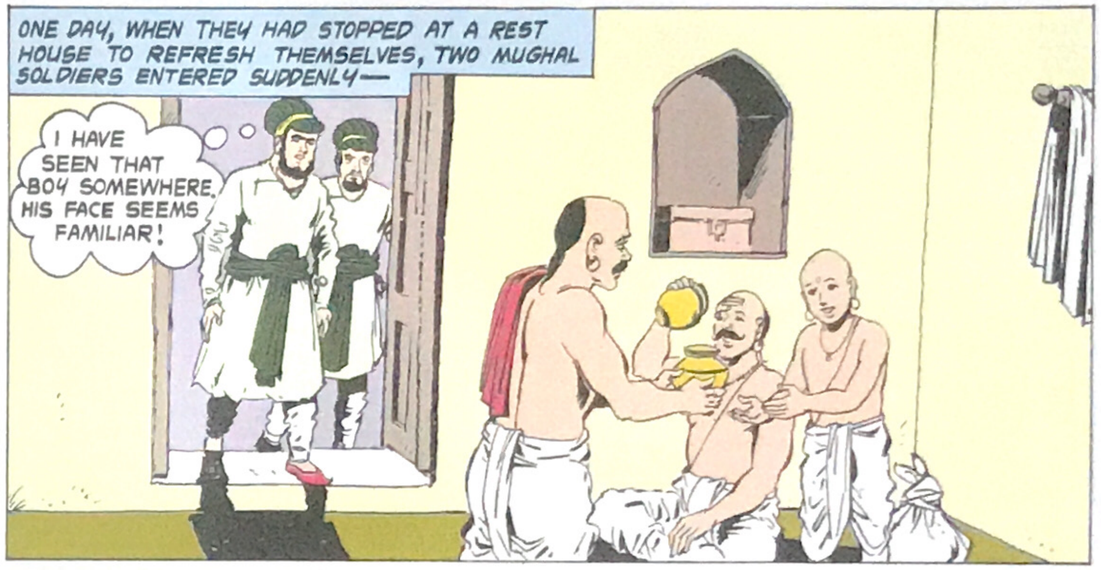

SO YOU MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM THE MUGHAL PRISON! I KNEW YOU'D SUCCEED! BUT WHERE IS SHAMBHU?
MOTHER...


PLEASE BRACE YOURSELF, MOTHER. I HAVE BAD NEWS FOR YOU. SHAMBHU DIED ON THE WAY.
MY SHAMBHU... DEAD?

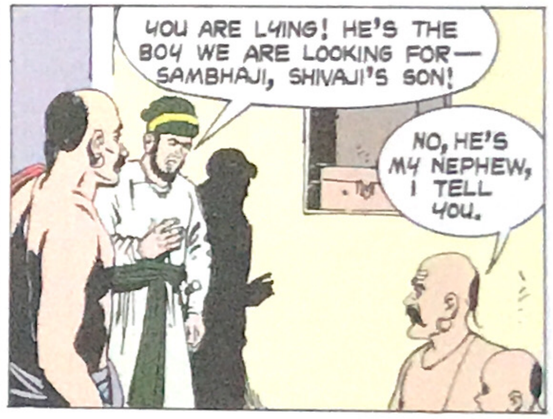

THE NEWS SPREAD RAPIDLY.
MAHARAJ SHIVAJI'S SON IS DEAD!
SAMBHAJI IS DEAD!

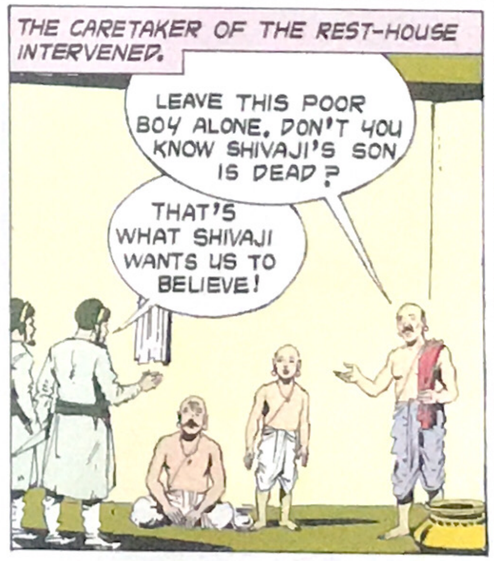

FINALLY, THE RUMOUR REACHED MATHURA, WHERE THE DECCANI BRAHMANA, KASHIPANT, WAS LIVING AT THE TIME.
IT IS THE RIGHT TIME TO LEAVE NOW FOR RAJGADH.

ACCOMPANIED BY A NINE-YEAR OLD BOY, KASHIPANT SET OUT ON THE LONG JOURNEY TO RAJGADH.


ONE DAY, WHEN THEY HAD STOPPED AT A REST HOUSE TO REFRESH THEMSELVES, TWO MUGHAL SOLDIERS ENTERED SUDDENLY—
I HAVE SEEN THAT BOY SOMEWHERE. HIS FACE SEEMS FAMILIAR!

WHO IS THIS BOY?
HE'S MY SISTER'S SON.


YOU ARE LYING! HE'S THE BOY WE ARE LOOKING FOR— SAMBHAJI, SHIVAJI'S SON!
NO, HE'S MY NEPHEW, I TELL YOU.


THE CARETAKER OF THE REST-HOUSE INTERVENED.
LEAVE THIS POOR BOY ALONE. DON'T YOU KNOW SHIVAJI'S SON IS DEAD?
THAT'S WHAT SHIVAJI WANTS US TO BELIEVE!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT! BUT I DO KNOW THAT THIS IS MY NEPHEW.
THEN PROVE IT!
HOW CAN I PROVE IT?

THE SOLDIER THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT. THEN —

I HAVE IT! YOU ARE A BRAHMANA SO IF THE BOY IS REALLY YOUR NEPHEW YOU CAN HAVE NO OBJECTION TO SHARING A MEAL WITH HIM.

IN FACT, WE WERE ABOUT TO SIT DOWN TO LUNCH!

THEN GO AHEAD!

THE BRAHMANA AND THE BOY WERE SERVED LUNCH —

NO BRAHMANA WILL EAT WITH A NON-BRAHMANA, EVEN OUT OF LOVE FOR HIS KING. YET, I WONDER...?

NOW EAT FROM YOUR NEPHEW'S PLATE! IF YOU REALLY ARE HIS UNCLE YOU WON'T MIND DOING THAT!

A BRAHMANA DOES NOT EAT FROM ANOTHER'S PLATE — NOT EVEN FROM HIS OWN SON'S! I WILL, HOWEVER, TO CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS.

KASHIPANT TOOK A MORSEL FROM THE BOY'S PLATE.

PARDON US FOR TROUBLING YOU!

MUCH TO KASHIPANT'S RELIEF, THE SOLDIERS THEN LEFT.

DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME LOOKING FOR SHIVAJI'S SON! I TELL YOU, HE IS DEAD!

THE TWO TRAVELLERS RESUMED THEIR JOURNEY.

AT LAST THEY REACHED RAJGADH.

SHAMBHU!

AAJI SAHEB!*

WAS IT INDEED SAMBHAJI? JIJABAI LOOKED ACCUSINGLY AT SHIVAJI.

PARDON ME, MOTHER, I COULDN'T TELL ANY ONE, EVEN YOU THAT SHAMBHU WAS SAFE TILL HE ACTUALLY REACHED HOME, OR THE PLAN MIGHT HAVE MISFIRED.

FATHER IS RIGHT! THERE WERE SOLDIERS LOOKING FOR US EVERYWHERE!

*GRANDMOTHER

THE MUGHALS WERE LOOKING FOR TWO OF US TOGETHER. SO SHAMBHU AND I PARTED COMPANY AT MATHURA, TO PUT THEM OFF THE SCENT!

THANK GOD, MY SHAMBHU IS SAFE, TOO!

KASHIPANT WAS REWARDED HANDSOMELY BY SHIVAJI.

THESE GIFTS ARE HARDLY ADEQUATE TO REPAY YOU. I SHALL BE EVER IN YOUR DEBT.

LATER—

SHAMBHU, NOW THAT YOU ARE BACK, YOU MUST RESUME YOUR EDUCATION.

BUT AAJI SAHEB, I'VE BEEN STUDYING ALL THE TIME. IN AGRA AND MATHURA I IMPROVED MY HINDI.

I CAN NOW WRITE POETRY IN HINDI AS WELL AS I CAN IN SANSKRIT!

SHAMBHU, READ SOME OF YOUR POEMS TO ME NOW!

SON, THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR POETRY! YOU MUST CONCENTRATE ON YOUR MILITARY TRAINING.

I WILL, FATHER.

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT SHIVBA? ARE YOU PLANNING TO RECAPTURE OUR LOST FORTS?

YES, MA SAHEB, BUT NOT RIGHT NOW. I NEED TIME TO REORGANISE MY ARMY.

TO BUY PEACE, SHIVAJI AGREED TO ACCEPT AURANGZEB AS HIS OVER-LORD. SAMBHAJI REPRESENTED HIS FATHER AT A FORMAL FUNCTION HELD AT AURANGABAD BY THE MUGHAL PRINCE, SHAH ALAM.

AS A MARK OF APPRECIATION, I PRESENT YOU WITH AN ELEPHANT AND THIS JEWELLED SWORD!

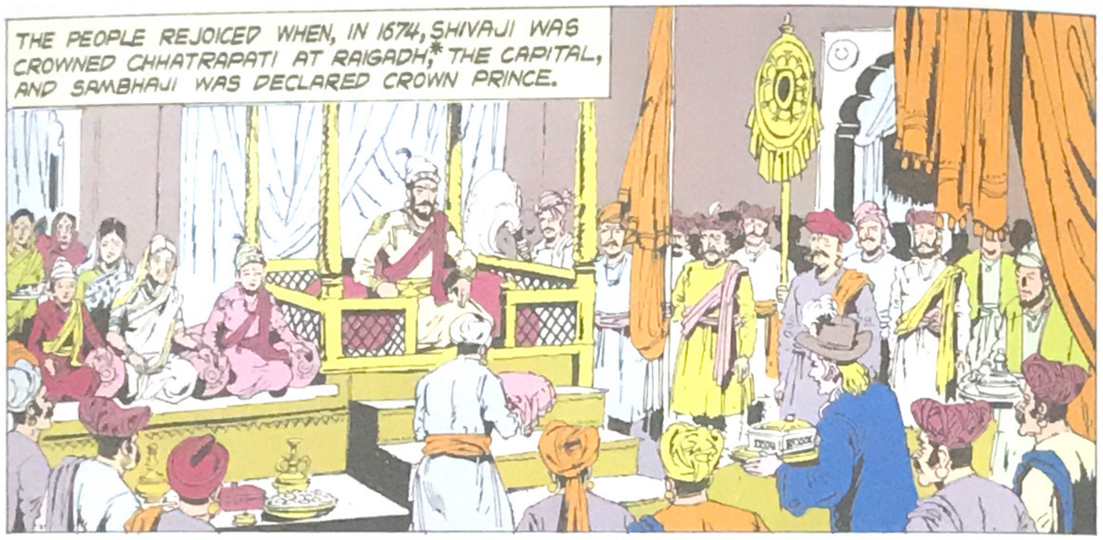
I AM DEEPLY HONOURED.

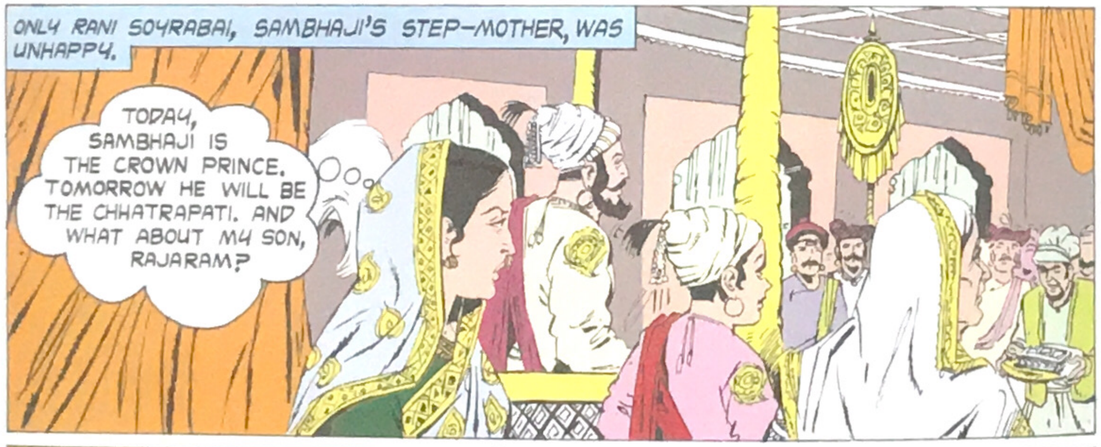
LATER WHEN SAMBHAJI RETURNED TO RAJGADH—

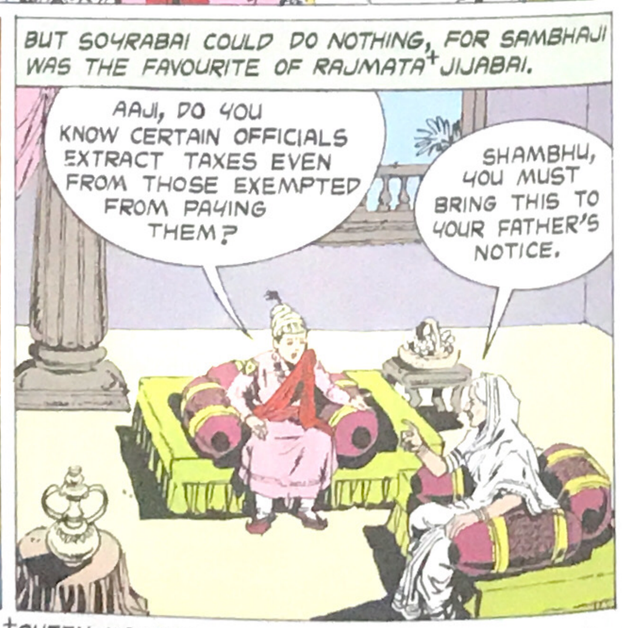
GOOD, NOW WE HAVE PEACE— TO PREPARE FOR WAR.

THE PEACE LASTED THREE YEARS— LONG ENOUGH FOR SHIVAJI TO MAKE HIS PREPARATIONS, THEN THE MARATHAS STRUCK…

…AND WON BACK THE FORTS EARLIER SURRENDERED TO THE MUGHALS.

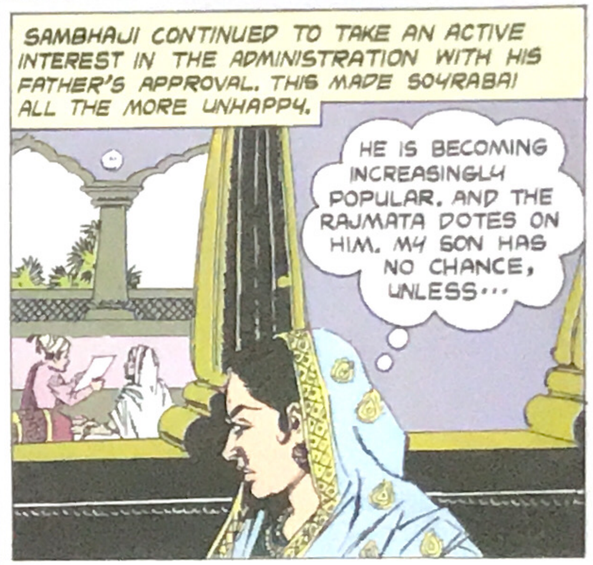

THE PEOPLE REJOICED WHEN, IN 1674, SHIVAJI WAS CROWNED CHHATRAPATI AT RAIGADH,* THE CAPITAL, AND SAMBHAJI WAS DECLARED CROWN PRINCE.

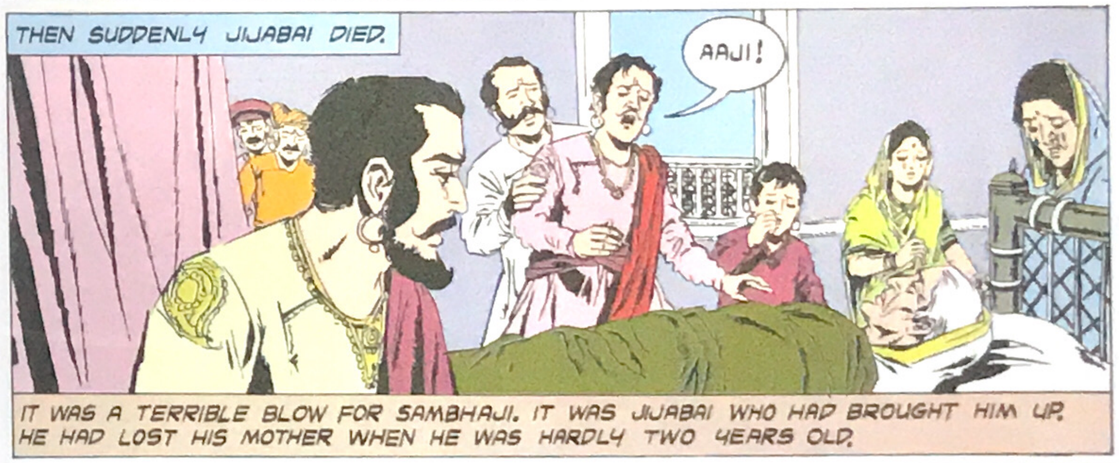

ONLY RANI SOYRABAI, SAMBHAJI'S STEP-MOTHER, WAS UNHAPPY.
TODAY, SAMBHAJI IS THE CROWN PRINCE. TOMORROW HE WILL BE THE CHHATRAPATI. AND WHAT ABOUT MY SON, RAJARAM?

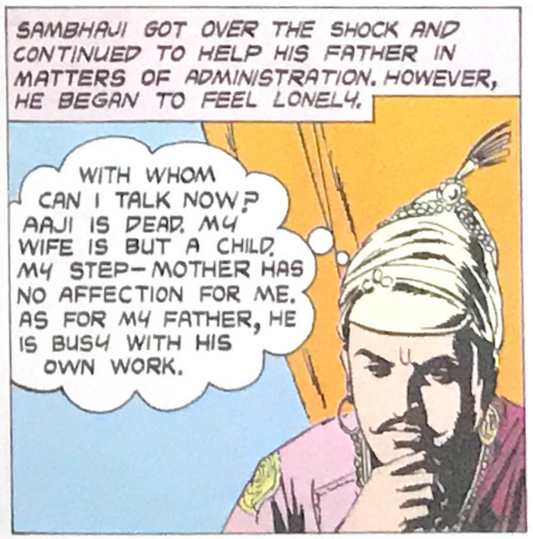

BUT SOYRABAI COULD DO NOTHING, FOR SAMBHAJI WAS THE FAVOURITE OF RAJMATA+ JIJABAI.
AAJI, DO YOU KNOW CERTAIN OFFICIALS EXTRACT TAXES EVEN FROM THOSE EXEMPTED FROM PAYING THEM?
SHAMBHU, YOU MUST BRING THIS TO YOUR FATHER'S NOTICE.

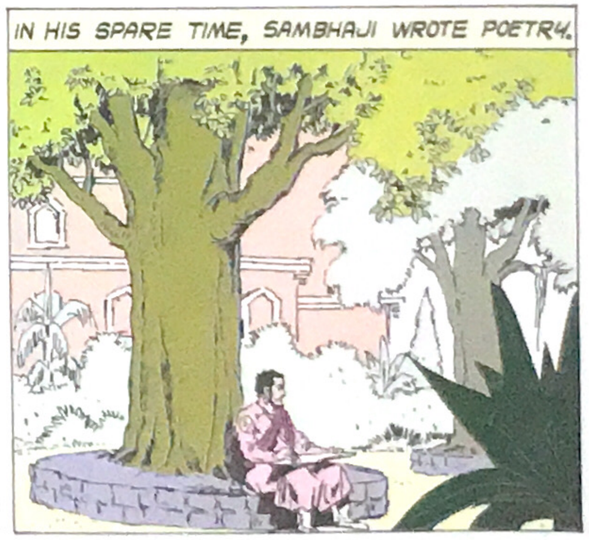
*NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH RAJGADH

+QUEEN MOTHER


SAMBHAJI CONTINUED TO TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE ADMINISTRATION WITH HIS FATHER'S APPROVAL. THIS MADE SOYRABAI ALL THE MORE UNHAPPY.
HE IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY POPULAR, AND THE RAJMATA DOTES ON HIM. MY SON HAS NO CHANCE, UNLESS...


THEN SUDDENLY JIJABAI DIED.
AAJI!
IT WAS A TERRIBLE BLOW FOR SAMBHAJI. IT WAS JIJABAI WHO HAD BROUGHT HIM UP. HE HAD LOST HIS MOTHER WHEN HE WAS HARDLY TWO YEARS OLD.


SAMBHAJI GOT OVER THE SHOCK AND CONTINUED TO HELP HIS FATHER IN MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION. HOWEVER, HE BEGAN TO FEEL LONELY.
WITH WHOM CAN I TALK NOW? AAJI IS DEAD. MY WIFE IS BUT A CHILD. MY STEP-MOTHER HAS NO AFFECTION FOR ME. AS FOR MY FATHER, HE IS BUSY WITH HIS OWN WORK.



IT WAS HIS LOVE FOR POETRY THAT BROUGHT HIM AND KALASH, THE POET FROM MATHURA, TOGETHER.

KALASH, LISTENING TO YOUR POETRY, MY WORRIES BECOME MORE BEARABLE.

FORGET THOSE WORRIES, PRINCE. ENJOY YOURSELF! BE MERRY!

SAMBHAJI ALSO DISCUSSED HIS PERSONAL PROBLEMS WITH HIS FRIEND.

FATHER IS LEAVING SHORTLY ON THE KARNATAKA EXPEDITION. WHILE HE IS AWAY, MY STEP-MOTHER IS BOUND TO CREATE TROUBLE FOR ME, KALASH.

SHE WILL NOT SUCCEED! COME, LISTEN TO THIS POEM I'VE JUST COMPOSED!

MEANWHILE, SOYRABAI HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO PUT HER SCHEMES INTO ACTION——

I AM NOT AT ALL HAPPY WITH SAMBHAJI. HE SPENDS ALL HIS TIME WITH THAT IDLE FELLOW, KALASH!

LISTEN...

NO, MAHARAJ. I KNOW HOW YOU LOVE YOUR ELDER SON. BUT I CONSIDER HIM A BAD INFLUENCE ON RAJARAM.

MY WIFE DOES NOT LIKE SAMBHAJI. THE TWO ARE BOUND TO CLASH DURING MY ABSENCE. I WILL SEND HIM AWAY FROM HERE TO AVOID THIS.

BEFORE LEAVING, SHIVAJI SENT FOR HIS SON——

I WANT YOU TO LOOK AFTER THE ADMINISTRATION OF SHRINGARPUR....

THAT LOOKS LIKE AN EXCUSE TO SEND ME AWAY FROM THE CAPITAL!

WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER, SON? WILL YOU GO IMMEDIATELY?

YES... YES, FATHER!

SAMBHAJI POURED OUT HIS PENT-UP FEELINGS TO KALASH——

IS THIS FAIR? AS THE CROWN PRINCE, MY PLACE, DURING MY FATHER'S ABSENCE, IS HERE IN THE CAPITAL, NOT IN FAR-OFF SHRINGARPUR!

YOUR STEP-MOTHER IS BEHIND THIS!

I AM SURE SHE IS PLOTTING TO HAVE HER SON, RAJARAM, CROWNED INSTEAD OF YOU.

WHO CAN DARE TO DEPRIVE ME OF MY INHERITANCE? I MAY BE SENT OUT OF THE CAPITAL, BUT I WILL BE BACK—— AT THE RIGHT TIME!

SAMBHAJI WENT TO SHRINGARPUR WITH HIS WIFE, YESUBAI. SOON AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL HE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM DILER KHAN, THE MUGHAL COMMANDER IN THE DECCAN.

YESUBAI, DILER KHAN WANTS ME TO JOIN THE MUGHALS.

JOIN THE MUGHALS? WHATEVER GAVE HIM THE IDEA THAT YOU WOULD?

WHEN THE CROWN PRINCE IS SENT AWAY FROM THE CAPITAL PEOPLE DO GET IDEAS!

WHAT WILL YOU SAY TO HIM?

DON'T YOU KNOW MY ANSWER? FATHER HAS SENT ME TO SHRINGARPUR. SO, I STAY HERE.

IN SHRINGARPUR, SAMBHAJI FOUND TIME TO STUDY MYTHOLOGY, HISTORY, LITERATURE AND POLITICAL SCIENCE.

HE ALSO COMPOSED A SANSKRIT WORK, BUDHABHOOSHAN. WHEN HE READ THE FIRST FEW VERSES TO YESUBAI—

YOU'VE DESCRIBED YOUR FATHER'S IDEAL OF SWARAJ* IN SUCH BEAUTIFUL LANGUAGE! HE WILL BE HAPPY TO LISTEN TO THIS WORK!

*INDEPENDENCE

SAMBHAJI ALSO TOURED EXTENSIVELY AND REPRIMANDED ERRING OFFICIALS.

YOU HOLD OFFICE TO HELP THE PEOPLE, NOT TO EXPLOIT THEM! YOU MUST BE JUST AND CONSIDERATE.

THIS CAUSED MUCH RESENTMENT AMONG THEM AND SOME OF THEM COMPLAINED TO SOYRABAI.

THE PRINCE HAS UNDERMINED OUR AUTHORITY. THE PEOPLE OF SHRINGARPUR NO LONGER RESPECT US.

HE SHOULD HAVE SHOWN BETTER SENSE! I'LL INFORM THE MAHARAJ ON HIS RETURN.

WHEN SHIVAJI RETURNED FROM HIS CAMPAIGN—

MAHARAJ, THE OFFICIALS AND MINISTERS ARE VERY UNHAPPY WITH SAMBHAJI!

I'LL SPEAK TO SAMBHAJI. AFTER ALL HE IS YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED.

TALKING TO HIM WON'T HELP. HE HAS ANTAGONISED EVERYBODY! HE DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO CARRY THE PEOPLE WITH HIM. BUT LOOK AT OUR RAJARAM! HE IS LOVED BY ALL!

MY WIFE HAS MADE UP HER MIND TO HATE SAMBHAJI!

MEANWHILE, SAMBHAJI WAS WAITING AT SHRINGARPUR FOR A MESSAGE FROM HIS FATHER.

FATHER RETURNED FROM THE CAMPAIGN WEEKS AGO! YET HE HAS NOT SENT FOR ME!

FINALLY, A MESSAGE DID ARRIVE BUT NOT THE ONE HE WAS HOPING FOR —

YESUBAI, FATHER WANTS US TO GO TO SAJJANGADH. BUT WHY? DOESN'T HE WANT TO SEE ME?

IT'S NOT FOR US TO QUESTION YOUR FATHER'S ORDERS. HE KNOWS WHAT IS GOOD FOR US.

SAMBHAJI WENT TO SAJJANGADH. BUT HE WAS NOT HAPPY.

YESUBAI, WE ARE IDLING AWAY OUR TIME HERE WHILE MY STEP-MOTHER IS POISONING FATHER'S MIND AGAINST ME!

BUT YOUR FATHER WON'T LISTEN TO HER!

HE WON'T LISTEN TO HER? I'VE HEARD RUMOURS THAT HE WANTS TO DIVIDE THE KINGDOM INTO TWO PARTS AND...

...HE WANTS TO GIVE THE LARGER PART TO RAJARAM AND THE SMALLER ONE CONSISTING OF KARNATAKA, TO ME.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

I, TOO, DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE THIS RUMOUR. BUT SUPPOSE IT IS TRUE, WHAT THEN?

AT THIS CRUCIAL POINT, DILER KHAN RENEWED HIS OFFER.

SHOULD I SAY NO AGAIN? OR...

SAMBHAJI SPENT A RESTLESS NIGHT.

MY FATHER DOES NOT EVEN WANT TO SEE ME! MY STEP-MOTHER POSITIVELY HATES ME! THE MINISTERS RESENT ME.

I WANT TO GET AWAY FROM EVERY ONE OF THEM! THE ONLY PERSON WHO MATTERED TO ME HERE IS, UNFORTUNATELY, DEAD!

OH, AAJI!

IN THE MORNING —

I'VE MADE UP MY MIND! I'LL ACCEPT DILER KHAN'S OFFER. I NEED HELP AGAINST SOYRABAI'S MACHINATIONS!

BUT HOW CAN YOU TRUST THE MUGHALS? THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN OUR ENEMIES!

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A PERMANENT FRIEND OR FOE. THE MUGHALS SHALL BE MY FRIENDS TILL I ACHIEVE MY GOAL. BESIDES, I HAVE NO REAL CHOICE IN THE MATTER!

SAMBHAJI AND YESUBAI WENT TO MAHULI AND TOOK A HOLY DIP AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE RIVERS, KRISHNA AND VENA.

LATER, THEY WENT TOWARDS THE MUGHAL CAMP. DILER KHAN RODE FROM HIS CAMP TO RECEIVE THEM.

I ASSURE YOU, SAMBHAJI, WE WILL GIVE YOU ALL THE HELP YOU NEED. WE WANT YOUR FRIENDSHIP.

MEANWHILE, SHIVAJI WAS INFORMED OF SAMBHAJI'S TREACHERY.

MY OWN SON HAS JOINED OUR WORST ENEMY! I CANNOT BELIEVE HE COULD BE CAPABLE OF SUCH A DESPICABLE ACT!

MY FEARS HAVE COME TRUE, MAHARAJ.

NOW MY HUSBAND WILL DISOWN HIM! MY SON WILL BE THE FUTURE KING!

THEN CAME NEWS OF THE FALL OF BHUPALGADH. WHEN PHIRANGOJI, THE CHIEF OF THE FORT, GAVE A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE AGAINST DILER KHAN AND SAMBHAJI—

MAHARAJ, WE TRIED TO SAVE THE FORT. BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE, FOR WE COULD NOT USE CANNONS.

WHY DIDN'T YOU USE OUR CANNONS, PHIRANGOJI?

SAMBHAJI RAJE WAS LEADING THEM, MAHARAJ. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN HARMED!

YOU SHOULD HAVE SHOT THE TRAITOR DEAD!

LATER WHEN SHIVAJI WAS ALONE —

ALL THE SAME, HE IS MY SON AND SUCCESSOR. SAMBHAJI IS YOUNG AND FOOLISH, BUT SOONER OR LATER HE WILL COME TO HIS SENSES!

MEANWHILE, DILER KHAN AND SAMBHAJI WERE MARCHING TOWARDS BIJAPUR.

THE SULTAN OF BIJAPUR IS BUT A CHILD AND SIDDI MASUD, THE REGENT, IS NOT POWERFUL.

WE SHOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IN TAKING BIJAPUR.

BUT SOON THEY RECEIVED DISTURBING NEWS.

SHIVAJI HAS RUSHED TWO CONTINGENTS TO MASUD'S HELP....

NEVER MIND. WE'LL PRESS FORWARD.

BUT DILER KHAN HAD SOON TO CHANGE HIS PLANS.

YOUR FATHER HAS SENT HIS MEN TO RAVAGE OUR TERRITORY.

I'VE DECIDED TO RAID THE MARATHA TERRITORY TO DRAW AWAY YOUR FATHER'S TROOPS. LET'S CAPTURE PANHALA.

DILER WAS IRRITATED AT HIS RECENT FAILURE AND VENTED HIS ANGER AGAINST THE INNOCENT POPULACE ON THE WAY.

WE'LL TAKE THEM PRISONERS UNLESS THEY AGREE TO PAY A RANSOM.

OH, SPARE MY POOR CHILDREN!

SIR, SEVERAL BANKERS AND RICH PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN SHELTER AT TIKOTA.

ON TO TIKOTA THEN!

AT TIKOTA —

TELL ME WHERE YOU HAVE HIDDEN YOUR WEALTH — OR YOUR LIFE IS AS GOOD AS LOST!

SPARE THESE POOR PEOPLE, DILER KHAN!

DON'T BE TIMID, SAMBHAJI! TO BUILD A KINGDOM YOU MUST HAVE A HEART MADE OF GRANITE!

IN ATHNI, DILER KHAN'S SOLDIERS WENT ON THE RAMPAGE AGAIN. THE PEOPLE TURNED TO SAMBHAJI.

WE APPEAL TO YOU IN MAHARAJ SHIVAJI'S NAME! SAVE US!

I WANT TO HELP YOU! THIS MASSACRE WAS CERTAINLY NOT WHAT I INTENDED!

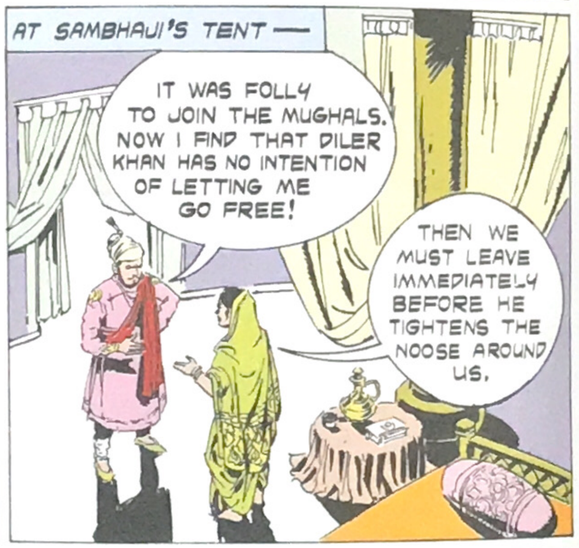
SAMBHAJI STRODE INTO DILER KHAN'S TENT.

DILER KHAN, YOU MUST STOP THIS AT ONCE!

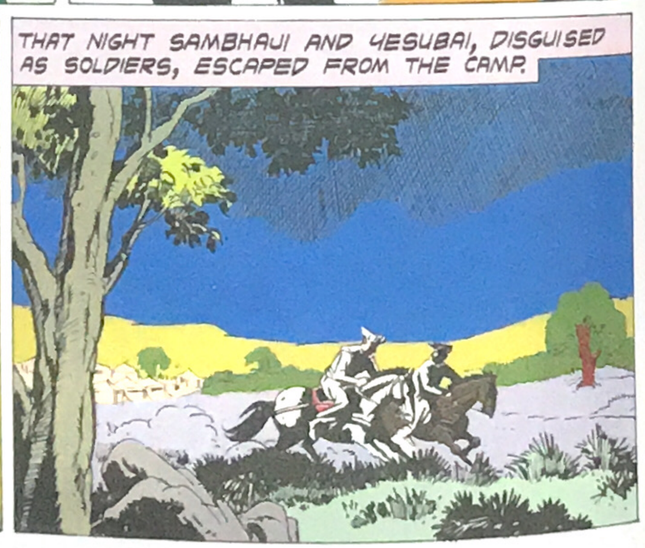
HOW DARE, YOU ORDER ME LIKE THIS? I AM MASTER HERE!
I AM HERE AS YOUR FRIEND, NOT AS YOUR SUBORDINATE!

AND I WOULD RATHER WALK OUT OF YOUR CAMP THAN COMPROMISE MY SELF-RESPECT!

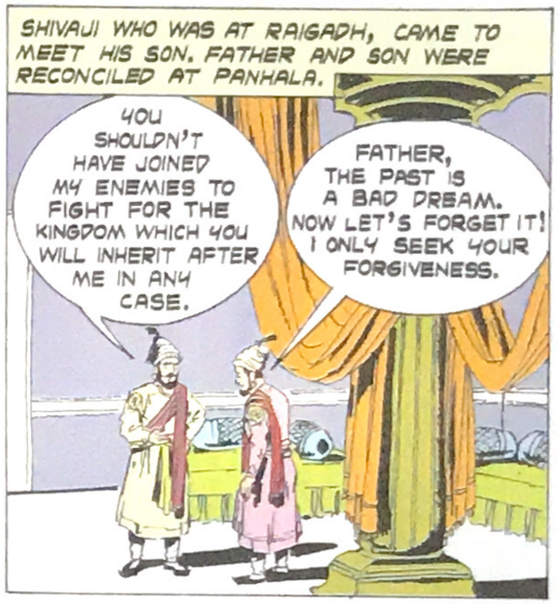
POOR PRINCE, HE DOES NOT REALISE THAT IT IS NOT AS EASY TO WALK OUT OF THE MUGHAL CAMP AS IT IS TO WALK INTO IT!

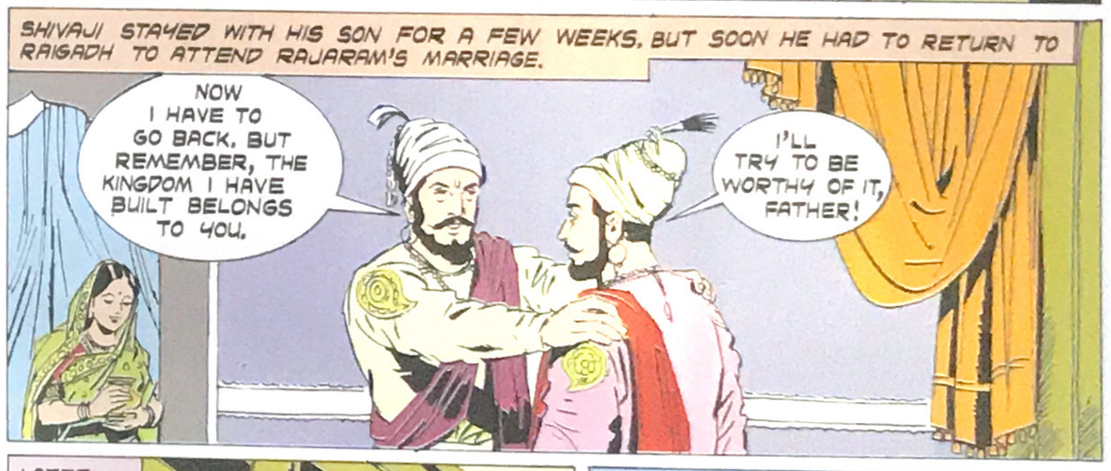

AT SAMBHAJI'S TENT —
IT WAS FOLLY TO JOIN THE MUGHALS. NOW I FIND THAT DILER KHAN HAS NO INTENTION OF LETTING ME GO FREE!
THEN WE MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE HE TIGHTENS THE NOOSE AROUND US.

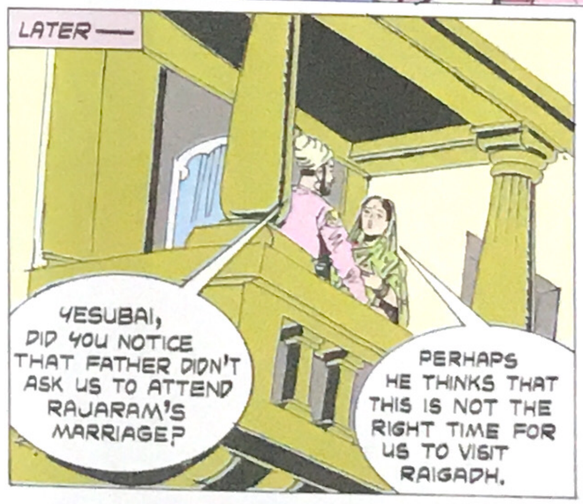
BUT WHERE CAN WE GO?
WE CAN GO TO YOUR FATHER. HE WILL PARDON YOU!


THAT NIGHT SAMBHAJI AND YESUBAI, DISGUISED AS SOLDIERS, ESCAPED FROM THE CAMP.

AT PANHALA —
OUR PRINCE HAS COME BACK!


SHIVAJI WHO WAS AT RAIGADH, CAME TO MEET HIS SON. FATHER AND SON WERE RECONCILED AT PANHALA.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE JOINED MY ENEMIES TO FIGHT FOR THE KINGDOM WHICH YOU WILL INHERIT AFTER ME IN ANY CASE.
FATHER, THE PAST IS A BAD DREAM. NOW LET'S FORGET IT! I ONLY SEEK YOUR FORGIVENESS.


SHIVAJI STAYED WITH HIS SON FOR A FEW WEEKS, BUT SOON HE HAD TO RETURN TO RAIGADH TO ATTEND RAJARAM'S MARRIAGE.
NOW I HAVE TO GO BACK, BUT REMEMBER, THE KINGDOM I HAVE BUILT BELONGS TO YOU.
I'LL TRY TO BE WORTHY OF IT, FATHER!


LATER —
YESUBAI, DID YOU NOTICE THAT FATHER DIDN'T ASK US TO ATTEND RAJARAM'S MARRIAGE?
PERHAPS HE THINKS THAT THIS IS NOT THE RIGHT TIME FOR US TO VISIT RAIGADH.

YOU ARE RIGHT. MY STEP-MOTHER WOULDN'T LIKE IT.

IN FACT, SOYRABAI WAS AT THE TIME TRYING HARD TO BEND SHIVAJI TO HER WAY OF THINKING—

MAHARAJ, MY SON SHOULD BE THE SUCCESSOR, NOT SAMBHAJI!

BUT RAJARAM IS HARDLY TEN YEARS OLD!

HE IS STILL YOUNG, IT IS TRUE, BUT HE IS LOVED BY ALL THE MINISTERS, AND HE DIDN'T DEFECT TO THE MUGHAL CAMP LIKE YOUR ELDER SON!

SHIVAJI WAS SILENT.

SAMBHAJI'S BRIEF DALLIANCE WITH THE MUGHALS HAS CAST A SLUR ON HIM. HE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO RETRIEVE HIS CHARACTER FULLY, AND HIS DETRACTORS WILL MAKE CAPITAL OF IT.

BUT BEFORE MAKING A FINAL DECISION, SHIVAJI FELL MORTALLY ILL.

I MUST KEEP THE NEWS FROM SAMBHAJI AND TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE RAJARAM'S SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE.

SHE WROTE A LETTER TO THE SUBEDAR OF PANHALA.

I WANT YOU TO HAND OVER THIS LETTER TO THE SUBEDAR ONLY. THIS SHOULD NOT FALL INTO SAMBHAJI RAJE'S HANDS. TAKE CARE.

BUT LATER THE MESSENGER RAN INTO THE VERY PERSON HE WANTED TO AVOID, AT THE FOOT OF PANHALA HILL—

SAMBHAJI!

EVEN AS THE MESSENGER TURNED HIS HORSE ROUND, SAMBHAJI SPOTTED HIM.

STRANGE! WHY IS HE TRYING TO AVOID ME?

HEY, STOP!

SOON, SAMBHAJI CAUGHT UP WITH THE MESSENGER.

PRINCE, I'M CARRYING A MESSAGE TO THE SUBEDAR OF PANHALA.

WHY ARE YOU RIDING AWAY FROM PANHALA, THEN?

HAND OVER THE LETTER TO ME.

BUT PRINCE!

HAND IT OVER!

YES... PRINCE.

FATHER IS ILL!

"... SHAMBHU RAJE SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE PANHALA..."

MY STEP-MOTHER DOES NOT WANT ME TO KNOW THAT FATHER IS ILL. INSTEAD OF TAKING CARE OF HIS HEALTH, SHE IS TAKING STEPS TO SAFEGUARD HER SON'S INTERESTS.

MEANWHILE IN RAIGADH, AT A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS —

THE CHHATRAPATI DIED WITHOUT NAMING HIS SUCCESSOR. IT'S FOR THIS COUNCIL NOW TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION.

WHOM SHALL WE HAVE AS THE CHHATRAPATI? THE HOT-TEMPERED, ILL MANNERED, DEFECTOR SAMBHAJI, OR THE YOUNG PRINCE RAJARAM?

WHAT WAS THE LATE CHHATRAPATI'S OPINION OF HIS TWO SONS, RANI SAHEB?

MY HUSBAND HAD CEASED TO TRUST HIS ELDEST SON AFTER HIS ALLIANCE WITH THE MUGHALS.

YES, THAT WAS A GREAT BETRAYAL. PEOPLE HAVE NOT FORGIVEN SHAMBHU RAJE FOR THAT TREACHEROUS ACT.

RAJARAM WOULD BE A BETTER CHOICE.

RANI SAHEB, LET'S CROWN RAJARAM. YOU COULD ACT AS REGENT TILL THE PRINCE COMES OF AGE.

I THINK IT'S A WISE CHOICE. BUT WE MUST SEE TO IT THAT SAMBHAJI DOES NOT CREATE TROUBLE.

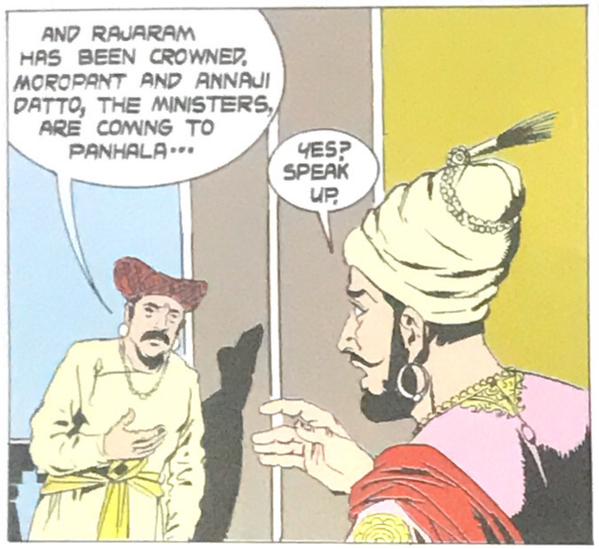
HE MUST BE PUT UNDER ARREST BEFORE HE LEARNS ABOUT THE CHHATRAPATI'S SAD DEMISE.

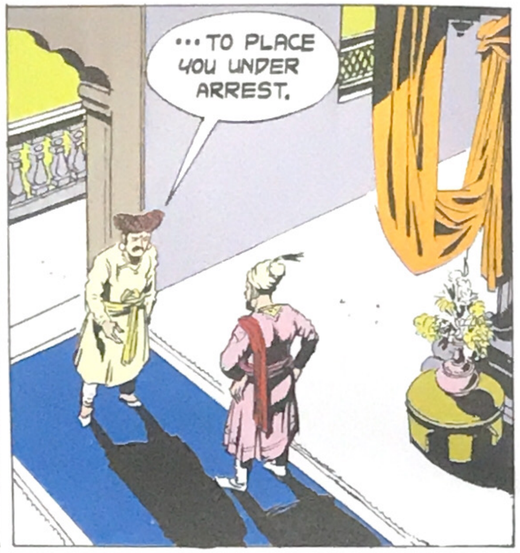
WELL, SAMBHAJI KNOWS NOTHING YET ABOUT HIS FATHER'S ILLNESS. THE SUBEDAR OF PANHALA HAS BEEN ASKED TO KEEP A WATCH ON HIS MOVEMENTS....

SOYRABAI DID NOT KNOW THAT AT THAT VERY MOMENT SAMBHAJI'S SPIES WERE REPORTING THE NEWS TO HIM AT PANHALA.

PRINCE, THE CHHATRAPATI IS DEAD.

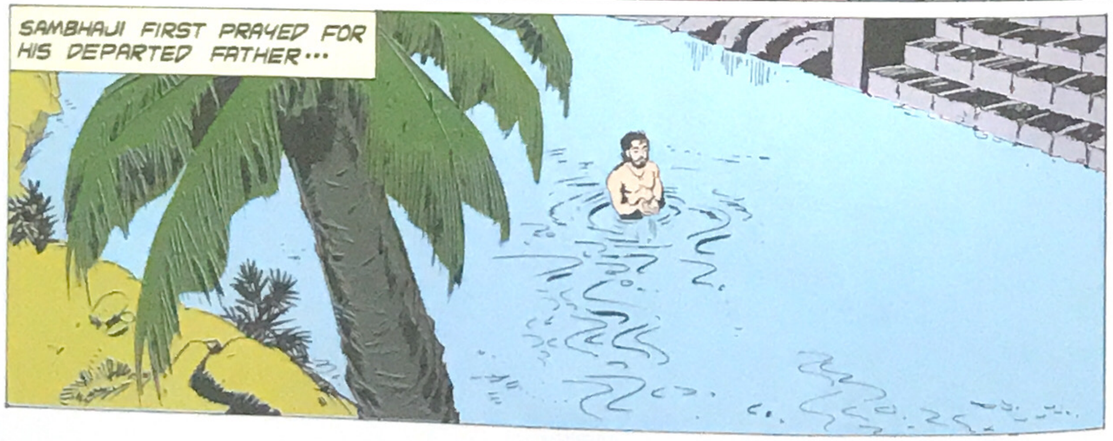
MY FATHER IS DEAD!

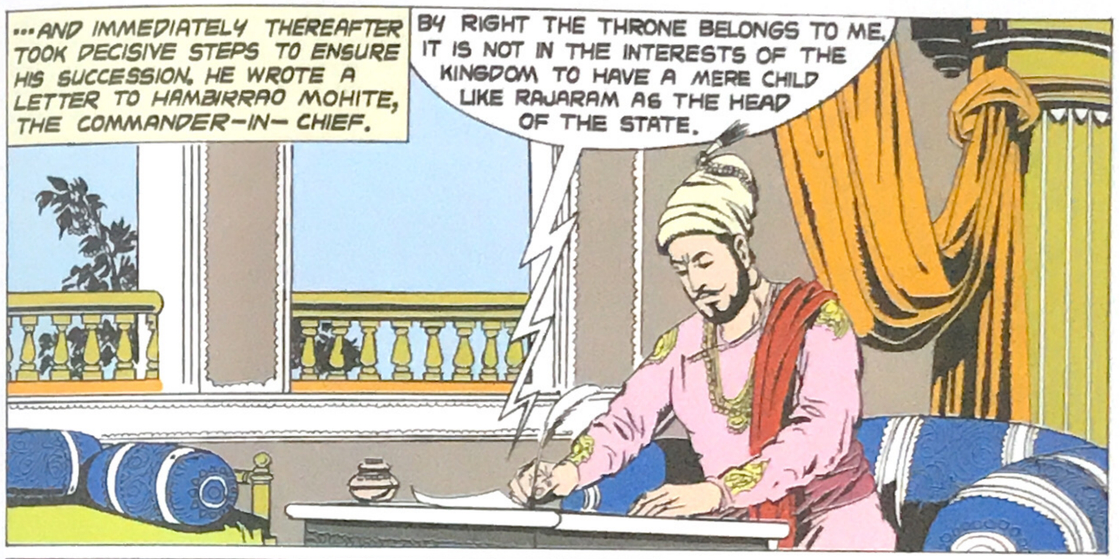

AND RAJARAM HAS BEEN CROWNED. MORDANT AND ANNAJI DATTO, THE MINISTERS, ARE COMING TO PANHALA...
YES? SPEAK UP.

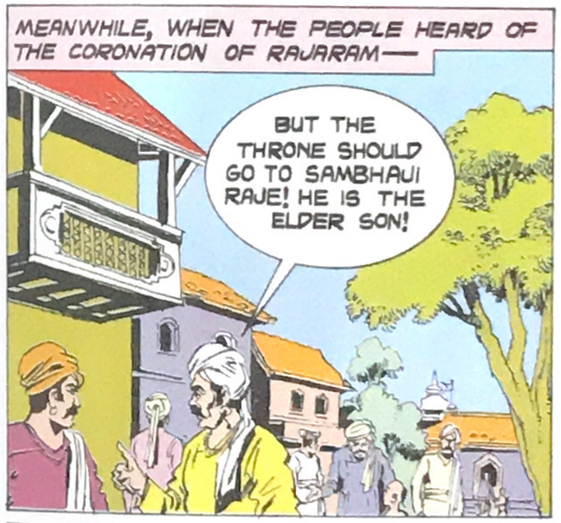

...TO PLACE YOU UNDER ARREST.

LATER —
SHOULD I WEEP FOR MY DEAD FATHER OR OVER MY LOST INHERITANCE?

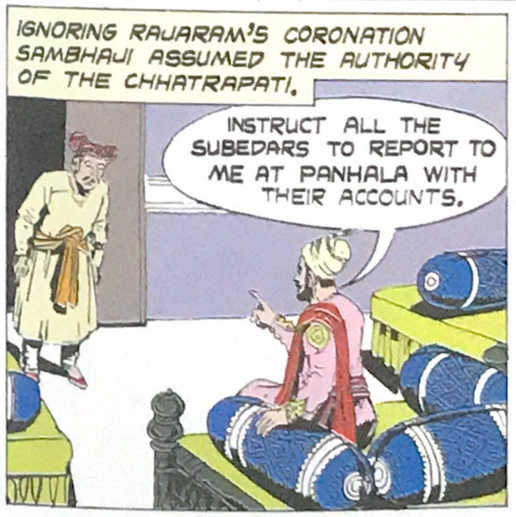
LOST INHERITANCE? LOST, DID I SAY? NO, NO. SOYRABAI SHALL NOT HAVE HER WAY!

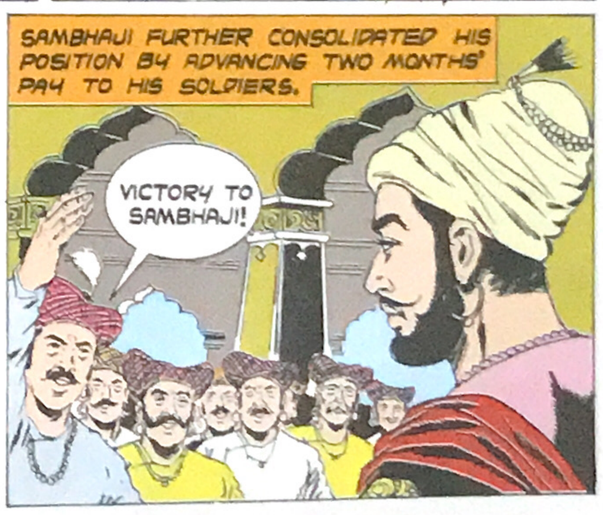

SAMBHAJI FIRST PRAYED FOR HIS DEPARTED FATHER...


...AND IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER TOOK DECISIVE STEPS TO ENSURE HIS SUCCESSION. HE WROTE A LETTER TO HAMBIRRAO MOHITE, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.
BY RIGHT THE THRONE BELONGS TO ME. IT IS NOT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE KINGDOM TO HAVE A MERE CHILD LIKE RAJARAM AS THE HEAD OF THE STATE.


MEANWHILE, WHEN THE PEOPLE HEARD OF THE CORONATION OF RAJARAM —
BUT THE THRONE SHOULD GO TO SAMBHAJI RAJE! HE IS THE ELDER SON!

THE PEOPLE AND THE SOLDIERS AT PANHALA SUPPORTED SAMBHAJI.
WE ARE WITH YOU, SHAMBHU RAJE!
YOU SHALL BE OUR CHHATRAPATI!


IGNORING RAJARAM'S CORONATION SAMBHAJI ASSUMED THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHHATRAPATI.
INSTRUCT ALL THE SUBEDARS TO REPORT TO ME AT PANHALA WITH THEIR ACCOUNTS.


SAMBHAJI FURTHER CONSOLIDATED HIS POSITION BY ADVANCING TWO MONTHS' PAY TO HIS SOLDIERS.
VICTORY TO SAMBHAJI!

MEANWHILE HAMBIRRAO, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED TO THE CAPITAL FROM A TOUR, RECEIVED SAMBHAJI'S LETTER. HE MET MOROPANT AND ANNAJI DATTO.

RAJARAM IS NOT THE RIGHT CHOICE. CAN HE STAND UP TO THE MUGHALS?

HAMBIRRAO, DO YOU THINK SAMBHAJI IS TRUSTWORTHY? HE JOINED HANDS WITH THE MUGHALS!

WE SHOULD NOT HOLD IT AGAINST SAMBHAJI. THE CHHATRAPATI HIMSELF HAD FORGIVEN HIM.

BUT THE CHHATRAPATI WAS VERY UNHAPPY WITH HIM.

HAMBIRRAO, WE'VE ALREADY CROWNED RAJARAM. WE CAN'T GO BACK ON THIS!

THE MINISTERS LEFT RAIGADH FOR PANHALA…

…BUT BEFORE THEY REACHED THEIR DESTINATION THEY WERE SURROUNDED BY HAMBIRRAO'S MEN.

HAMBIRRAO, YOU CANNOT DO THIS TO US!

I'M SORRY. BUT I HAVE TO TAKE YOU PRISONER.

ON RECEIVING THE NEWS, SAMBHAJI LEFT FOR RAIGADH WITH HIS ARMY. ON THE WAY, HE STOPPED AT PRATAPGADH TO WORSHIP TULAJA BHAVANI, THE FAMILY DEITY.

AS HE RODE TO RAIGADH, HIS RANKS SWELLED AS MORE AND MORE SOLDIERS JOINED HIM.

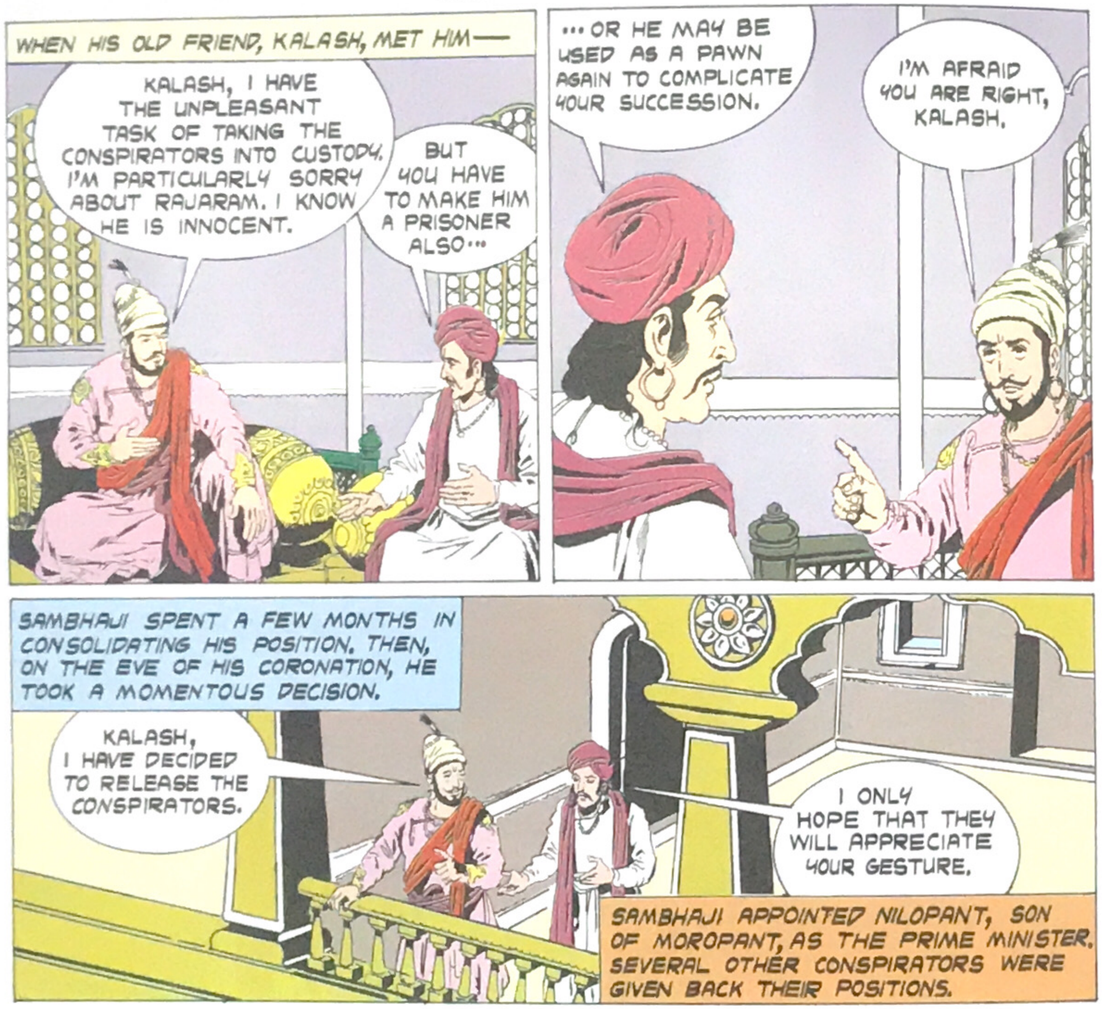
WHEN HE FINALLY ARRIVED AT RAIGADH WITH 20,000 MEN, HE MET WITH NO OPPOSITION.

VICTORY TO SHAMBHU RAJE!

LATER—

HAMBIRRAO, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

PLEASE DON'T, MAHARAJ. I'VE ONLY DONE MY DUTY.


WHEN HIS OLD FRIEND, KALASH, MET HIM—
KALASH, I HAVE THE UNPLEASANT TASK OF TAKING THE CONSPIRATORS INTO CUSTODY. I'M PARTICULARLY SORRY ABOUT RAJARAM. I KNOW HE IS INNOCENT.
BUT YOU HAVE TO MAKE HIM A PRISONER ALSO...
...OR HE MAY BE USED AS A PAWN AGAIN TO COMPLICATE YOUR SUCCESSION.
I'M AFRAID YOU ARE RIGHT, KALASH.
SAMBHAJI SPENT A FEW MONTHS IN CONSOLIDATING HIS POSITION. THEN, ON THE EVE OF HIS CORONATION, HE TOOK A MOMENTOUS DECISION.
KALASH, I HAVE DECIDED TO RELEASE THE CONSPIRATORS.
I ONLY HOPE THAT THEY WILL APPRECIATE YOUR GESTURE.
SAMBHAJI APPOINTED NILOPANT, SON OF MOROPANT, AS THE PRIME MINISTER. SEVERAL OTHER CONSPIRATORS WERE GIVEN BACK THEIR POSITIONS.
ON JANUARY 16, 1681, THE CORONATION CEREMONY TOOK PLACE. SAMBHAJI, THE SON OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS SHIVAJI, SUCCEEDED HIM AS THE NEW CHHATRAPATI.
ANOTHER CHAPTER HAD BEGUN IN THE HISTORY OF THE MARATHAS.
"THIS IS THE SEAL OF SAMBHAJI, THE SON OF SHIVAJI. ANY ORDER ADORNED BY IT IS INVIOLABLE FOR EVER".

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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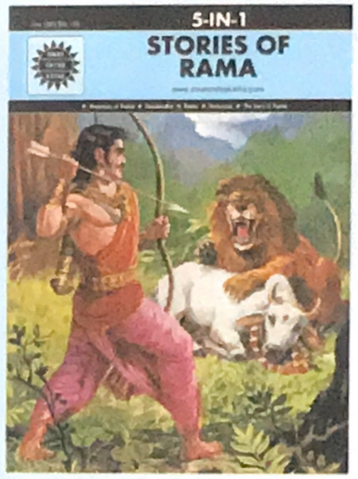

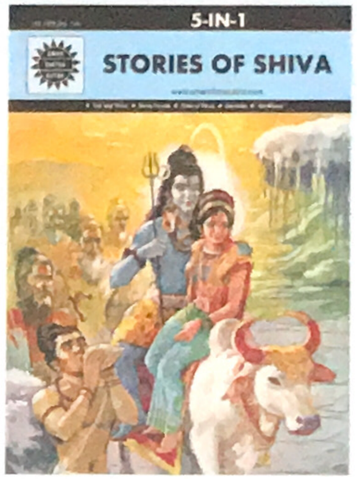

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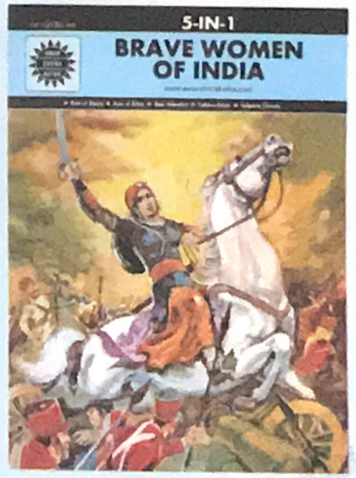

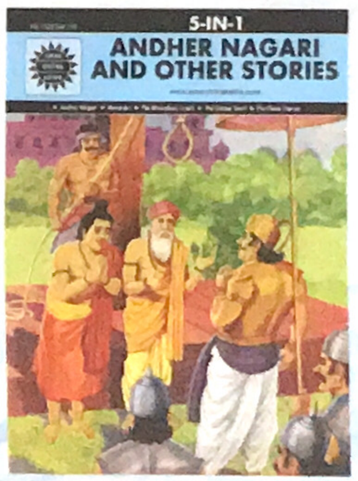

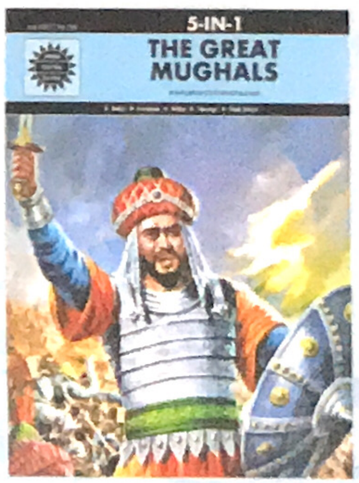

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